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[citation information]

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Folder 10: Letters 91-100

[Letter #91]

W.T. Walters
Paris June 1/1873
Has visited Berlin, Dresden and Vienna to inspect collections of Casts. Will select more than half required in Paris and England. Expects to secure some of the works of Gerome, [Cabanal? = Cabanel?] and Ary Scheffer. Recommends the propriety of making a collection of Porcelain and [Fayance?] manufacture, recognized everywhere as one of the Kindred Arts. Recommends procuring a complete collection of the works in Bronze of Barye (who is now 75 years of age).

W. Walters
Paris 1 June 1873

Dear Sir,

During my leisure at sea I was by reflection enabled to realize the seriousness of the position I had assumed in relation to the “Corcoran Art Gallery” and since my arrival more than half my time has been occupied in the endeavor to inform myself in detail about the situation here and elsewhere in those matters which concerned [this?] situation. I knew from the impression made upon in Berlin some years ago that the Academy there had made the most comprehensive collections of Casts and had also adopted the most intelligent arrangement of them, of any where in Europe. I have just returned from Berlin when my first impression was entirely confirmed. I visited also Dresden and Vienna where much attention has been paid to this brand of art and [have?] also I have gone fully over the ground, so that it is only now I feel justified in acting by the selection and purchase of what I feel we require in this [branch?]. I go tomorrow to England where together with [have?] I shall see lot more than half we require.

In the [department?] of painting and the chance of securing proper examples I have been also [industrious?] in the endeavor to understand the situation, it is difficult to convey to you and adequate estimate of the enormous prices paid for certain leading names - not justified or I think by any proper estimate of their merit or value very often and yet this is made at times to apply to artists so representative and so characteristic that the Gallery should not be remarked for their absence. There is one thing which in some cases will prove a saving clause to us in that some of the most distinguished artists have executed their finest works of dimensions so considerable that if their respective governments do not purchase them for their public Gallery other sources like ours are limited that prices are made more moderate. I have even now some hope, and I have already had some negociation of securing very remarkable examples of “Gerome”, [“Cabanal?” = Cabanel?], and Ary [Scheafer? = Scheffer?].

With living artists I make the most of the argument in favor of the credit and advantage they would derive in being seen to advantage in the “Capital of the Nation” and in an institution more liberally provided and likely to become the most important in our Country.

I have made myself familiar with the present Salon in an annual exhibition of living artists, now in progress and I shall return and be present here at the closing on 25th June when I am not without the hope I may secure a few things at reasonable prices. I shall spend also the greater part of August at Vienna where it is possible I may be able to accomplish something.

I have been much impressed with the present condition, resulting from the progress the past few years of the “Porcelain” and [Fayanal?] manufacture, beginning with “Sevres”. The forms decoration and colouring has imparted an interest to it which indears me to recommend the propriety of making a collection of these objects for which we would have ample room and I think it could be made an interesting and instructing though not a very expensive feature. It is recognised every where as one of the “Kindred Arts” and now that paintings have become so expensive and so difficult to obtain these admired features acquire additional importance.

I would recommend also that a collection complete of the works in “Bronze” of the sculptor of animals “Barye”, should be made. Since they are generally small the sum they would cost is inconsiderable and I believe he is regarded the first sculptor of this epoch now 75 years of age and about to pass away it will only be a short time until it would be difficult to obtain many of his things. I would be obliged if the “Trustees” would act upon and instruct me in regard to these two suggestions as I do not feel myself authorised without it.

The exhibition of the [Fayance?] manufacture will be extensive at Vienna where a convenient opportunity would be presented of [ma?] [illegible] selections.

My recent experience has satisfied me that at least I have underated the importance of having at the institution of Washington a gentleman in charge and supervision not only of general intelligence, but a person who comprehends all the requisites in detail of such a place, and who

understands intelligence in theory of the various branches of art and their kindred connections. I have been much impressed with this necessity after my intercourse here and in Germany with the numerous “Professors” in charge of such relations. Where I have found them intelligent in regard to the general history, rise and progress of art, understanding classifications, chronology and the various distinguishing epochs of art. A certain understanding is also important as well as watchfulness in regard to the preservation of works and objects. I trust the Trustees if they agree with me may know a competent person in the place. I do not.

I will be obliged to secure the office of someone here to assist me and in my absence to reprisal and attend to the detail, it will also be reassuring to employ someone for a commission to make some of the purchases, for whilst many of the artists would sell me direct quite as low or lower it is not the case with all as a practice prevails of selling a dealer lower. A very superior person for this purpose is a personal friend of mine who has lived here 15 years, Mr. [George A. Lucas?], one of the Balto family of Lucas, not a businessman but having [system?], very honest, superior knowledge of art, great integrity. He has represented Mr. Avery of [illegible], myself and others in Balto, and will be of great service to us here.

Mr. Corcoran and the Trustees will I trust excuse the liberty I have taken in making suggestions and elaborating the subject unasked, but as these reflections have been the result of my experience since I left it was a duty I conceived to refer to them.

With kind remembrance to all the Trustees and my affectionate regards to Mr. Corcoran whom I hope continues very well. I am respectfully your friend.

WT. Walters

[Plans?] given to Mr. Hyde April 3, 1874]

[Letter #92]

[Back of Letter #92]

Richards T.A.
Sends copy of the constitution with regard to school. [and?] c.

[Embossed with the National Academy of Design, Corner 23rd Street and 4th Avenue, New York]
9 June 1873

To Professor Henry

Dear Sir,

My absence from the city will, I trust, excuse my delay in replying to your note of the [illegible]. I am sorry that we have but very little printed matter on the subject of your inquiries, but I will send you a copy of our Constitution and also a brief circular which will advise you of the nature and scope of our School Department. At present the Cooper Union provides means for the elementary study required for [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. Our rules of government [is?] very simple [exacting?] only [our?] [industry?] fair [illegible] and good order. We manage very well with our present number of [handouts?] with the services of our instructor and assistant in the antique and life [illegible] and a teacher in the painting schools [decides?] the oversight and counsel of our officers and head [musicians?] who are, as you are aware, all of [necessity?], [profits?] what artists. The expenses of the schools, no changes being made for rent, are about seven thousand dollars per year. I am glad that your propose our educational department is your scheme for the Corcoran Gallery and I [do?] [not?] doubt that it will be successful and useful.

With respect dear [sir?]
[From?] [illegible] T. Addison Richards [Corlee?] [illegible]

[Letter #93]

Edward Van Reuth
June 9, 1873
Would be happy to show his picture “the church of the Catacombs” to Mr. Corcoran or the Trustees of the Gallery.

A. Hyde Esq.
Secretary Corcoran Gallery of Art

I have the honor to inform you that my picture “The Church of the Catacombs” is now on exhibition. 94 W. Charles Street (Boyston and Bayles Store) Baltimore, and that i will be happy to show it to Mr. Corcoran or to the Trustees of his gallery if they should happen to be in Baltimore any time this week or next week after 11 o’clock A.M.

I remain sir very respectfully
Edward Van Reuth
Studio 20 Mulberry
Baltimore June 9, 1873

Circular of “the Church of the Catacombs” a painting by Edward Van Reuth
June 6, 1873

[Letter #94]

J.C. Hall
June 12, 1873
To Mr. Hyde
Will lay his communication before the committee

June 12, 1873

A. Hyde

Dear Sir

I shall with pleasure lay your communication of the [16th?] [illegible] before the committee.

We are in correspondence with the Art Institution at the [North?], and hope to be enlightened by their experience.

It will not be the duty of the [illegible] to name or recommend any one for any place, but simply to resignate the gratification of the office and the duties of his position.

As to myself I am entirely uncommitted, even in thought and shall be influenced solely by the best interests of the Institution.

No one more highly appreciates your services and abilities than I do and I earnestly hope that my duty to the Gallery will never be in conflict with my sincere desire to concur in anyview or wish you may express.

[Yours?] truly
J.C. Hall

[Letter #95]

Marcus L. Ward
June 21, 1873
About Duraud's picture, a landscape, which he would like to see purchased for the Gallery

Newark N.J. June 21, 1873

Honorable W.W. Corcoran

Dear Sir:

I beg to call [to?] your attention to a subject which I have thoughts might be agreeable to yourself and result in possible advantage to the people of the Country. Mr. Durand the well known artist, a Jerseyman residing in South Orange in this State, has in his studio a large picture - landscape with trees - which is deemed his very best work, and which his friends would be blessed to see in the Corcoran Gallery which your munificence gave to the Country. As an example of American Art and of American scenery, I consider it one of the most interesting pictures to be obtained in the Country, and would, I think, reflect [illegible] upon any collection.

Mr. Durand is now old, and though still measurably occupied in his favorite profession, will not probably do much more. Desiring to place the subject of the purchase of this picture before the Trustees of the Corcoran Gallery, and not knowing who, other than yourself, represents the Institution I have written this letter in the hope that the subject may need your favorable consideration.

I do not know whether it be a part of the general plan of the Institution to form a collection of specimens of the works of our own Artists who have distinguished themselves, but it has seemed to me that such a feature, illustrating the history of past as well as of American scenery and subjects, would be a happy feature of the Institution and would attract the attention, not onl of Americans, but of strangers visiting the Country.

Very Respectfully Yours,
Marcus L. Ward

[Letter #96?]

[uncertain if there is a letter 96 in this folder]

[Letter #97?]

W.T. Walters
Paris July 13, 1873
Encloses a list of paintings purchased as showing the current condition of this Dept of Art" omitting extravagant things.

Has been disappointed in not being able to close for the purchase of Cabanals "Death of Moses" price too high.

Thinks it important at the outset to establish a proper standard of prices.

Has ordered at London about ⅔ of the casts of the Elgin Marbles. The Baptistry Gates at Florence, and such antiques as required. Also casts of antiques at Paris and Rome. Will be 3 or 4 months before they can be shipped.

Paris 13 July 1873
Mr. A. Hyde, Secretary

Dear Sir,

I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter of 23 June. Convey to the Trustees please my thanks for their complimentary resolution.

I enclose a list of paintings purchased and paid for and which will be forwarded at once by steamer to Balto. I shall [cover?] bills of lading to be forwarded to you from time to time and will you please procure such action at the Treasury Department as will enable them to be forwarded from the steamer direct by rail to Washington, otherwise they will be sent to Public Store in Balto.

I feel I have been fortunate in securing the works by Gerome and Sheffer both of them fine examples of acknowledged masters.

The pictures I have purchased will all go forward in next two weeks except Gerome's, who wishes to do something to improve it and after their arrival I should like the Trustees to inspect them and give me their impressions and judgement in regard to my future action. The Gerome and Scheffer are exceptional things. The balance as I think show fairly the current condition of this department of art - that is painting with extravagant things. They will show also the extravagant demand made by American artists for less merit in the Departments of Figures, Landscape and Still Life. This object I have had in view that as well as getting proper things it could be seen and the "foray" properly met which will be made upon us to purchase American things at ridiculous prices. You will I think find the landscapes very effective and at prices not over one fourth demanded in America. I shall now direct more of my attention to historic and more important figure works. I have been disappointed in not being able to close for the purchase of an important work by "Cabanal" "The Death of Moses", as I thought he demanded too great of a price. It strikes me nothing in our [?uration] is of greater importance than to establish at the outset a proper standard. This secured it will be much less difficult to maintain it.

I brought letters when I came to England to the gentleman in charge of the Kensington Museum who were of great value to me. I heard from them of an Englishman who went to Boston two years ago and has a prominent position. There under the State he has recently published a book entitled "Art Education". Say to Dr. Hall I am sure he would be interested in the book and his friends informed me they had no doubt if he was invited and his expenses paid to Washington he would come there for any consultation our Trustees might invite, he would I think

be found a useful person to confer with and might also have acquaintance with such a party as the Trustees are looking for, his name is Walter Smith, State Director of Art Education.

I have ordered at London about ⅔ of the Casts from the Elgin Marbles, as much as I thought we required. The Baptistry Gates at Florence and such antiques as we required. I have ordered also all Casts from important antiques here and at Rome and am [securing?] and will continue to do so all expedition in completing them. It will however be three or four months before I can hope to ship them.

I will make diligent enquiry in regard to the subject of Porcelain and Sevres now, but as yet have done nothing.

Barye I find has produced a collection of about 25,000 frames. I would not recommend the purchase I think of over 10,000 frames to which extent I am sure we might [so?] and secure remarkable interest.

With kind regards
Respectfully,
W.T. Walters

[Handwritten list of purchases enclosed with letter]

[from the Register of Letters Received at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1869-1884 for letter 97 is the note “Encloses a list of paintings purchased “as showing the <u>current</u> conditions of this department of art.” omitting [extravigans] things. Has been disappointed in not being able to close for the purchase of [Gabanets] Death of [Heroes]” - price too high.
Thinks it important at the outset to establish a proper standard of prices.
Has ordered at London about ⅔ of the casts of the Elgin Marbles, the Baptistry
Gate at Florence, and such [antiques] as required. Also casts of antiques at Paris & Rome. Will be 3 or 4 months before they can be shipped.

[Letter #98]

Sarah E. Fuller
July 24, 1873
New York
Wishes to know if it is designed to include a department of instruction in engraving in connection with Art Gallery

25 [Bond?] Street
July 24, 1873 New York

To the Trustees of the Corcoran Art Gallery

Gentleman,

I have recently been informed that in connection with the Art Gallery, you propose establishing a School of Design.

I desire much to know if your plans include a department for instruction in engraving. I have been engraving on wood for a number of years. I have lately received overtures for [removing?] to Washington. In a visit recently made to Washington, I found fair [inducements ?] for business. But I have also contemplated giving instruction in my art, especially to [illegible]. I have therefore taken the liberty to write to you that I may know of your plans will cover, or supersede my work in that direction. The subject is one to which I have given much thought. I have also given much attention to the working of the various Schools of Design in the Country and as I should dislike to remove to Washington, and find my plans [forestalled?], I have written to you in advance, before making any change from
New York.

I remain yours respectfully,
Sarah E. Fuller

[Letter #99]

W.T. Walters
January 24, 1873
With regard to a meeting of the Trustees

Balto [Baltimore] 24 January 1873

Mr. A. Hyde
[illegible]

I have your letter of yesterday. Tuesday or Wednesday [illegible] either will answer me very well. I may see you tomorrow or Monday and have a little talk with you in regard to the meeting.

Respectfully,
W.T. Walters

[Letter #100]

G. A. Lucas
4 August 1873

41 Rue de l'arc de [illegible] Paris
4 August 1873

A. Hyde, Secretary
Corcoran Gallery of Art
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed you will please find "copy" of invoice of three cases pictures shipped you by direction of Mr. William [illegible] Walters.

These cases will be forwarded by the [hand?] of Lherbette Kane and Company, Paris, and should leave on the steamer Berlin, sailing from Southampton the eighth of August.

The bills of lading and legalized invoice will be addressed you by [Messrs?] Lherbette Kane and Company.

I am, Sir
Yours most respectfully,
G.A. Lucas

[Handwritten inventory list of threes cases pictures enclosed with letter]
[Bill of lading from Lherbette Kane and Company to A. Hyde enclosed with letter]